

FRANKLIN CANYON SITE



estled in the heart of Los Angeles is a refuge for wildlife and people known as Franklin Canyon. It is an island of open space surrounded by the city. Picnic under sycamore trees or bike along chaparral covered slopes. Watch for ground squirrels scurrying around their holes or red-tail hawks soaring overhead. The animals who stay in this refuge are little affected by the great events that transformed a small pueblo into a major metropolis.

Oil and Water

The history of the canyon is separate but inseparable from the city that surrounds it. Edward L. Doheny discovered oil in Los Angeles in 1892. The wealthy Doheny family later owned 6 ranches, including a 400 acre parcel in Beverly Hills purchased in 1912. The Spanish style home in lower Franklin Canyon was built on the northern end of their property around 1935 to serve as a family retreat.

Oil provided the fuel for prosperity but water was scarce in this semi-arid environment. In 1914 William Mulholland and the Department of Water & Power (DWP) began construction of a reservoir in upper Franklin Canyon to distribute water newly brought from the Owens Valley. Water and oil transformed Los Angeles from a small town into a major metropolis. Ironically, DWP ownership of the reservoir and adjoining properties helped discourage further development in this canyon.

The National Park Service purchased the Franklin Canyon Ranch in 1981. That year the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom began the continuing service of providing free educational programs to the public and local schools. Today the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy manages daily park operations in Franklin Canyon. As a part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, this special refuge is available for everyone to enjoy.

Information & Safety

Natural and historic features are protected by law and may not be collected. Do not feed or disturb the ducks, squirrels and other wildlife.

Dogs must be on leash at all times and are not allowed to swim in any bodies of water. Please clean up after your pet.

Bicyclists must ride courteously and yield to hikers and horseback riders. Bicycles are allowed on fire roads, but not on trails.

Firearms are not allowed in parklands.

Trail closures will be in effect during and following significant rainfall to protect park resources; trails will be re-opened when dry enough to sustain public use.

Water from streams, the reservoir and ponds is not safe to drink due to possible contamination or the presence of the giardia protozoan. Swimming and fishing are not permitted.

Stay on established trails and avoid rattlesnakes, ticks and poison oak. Please respect private property.

Fire is a constant danger. Open fires, charcoal and gas stoves are prohibited. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the park.

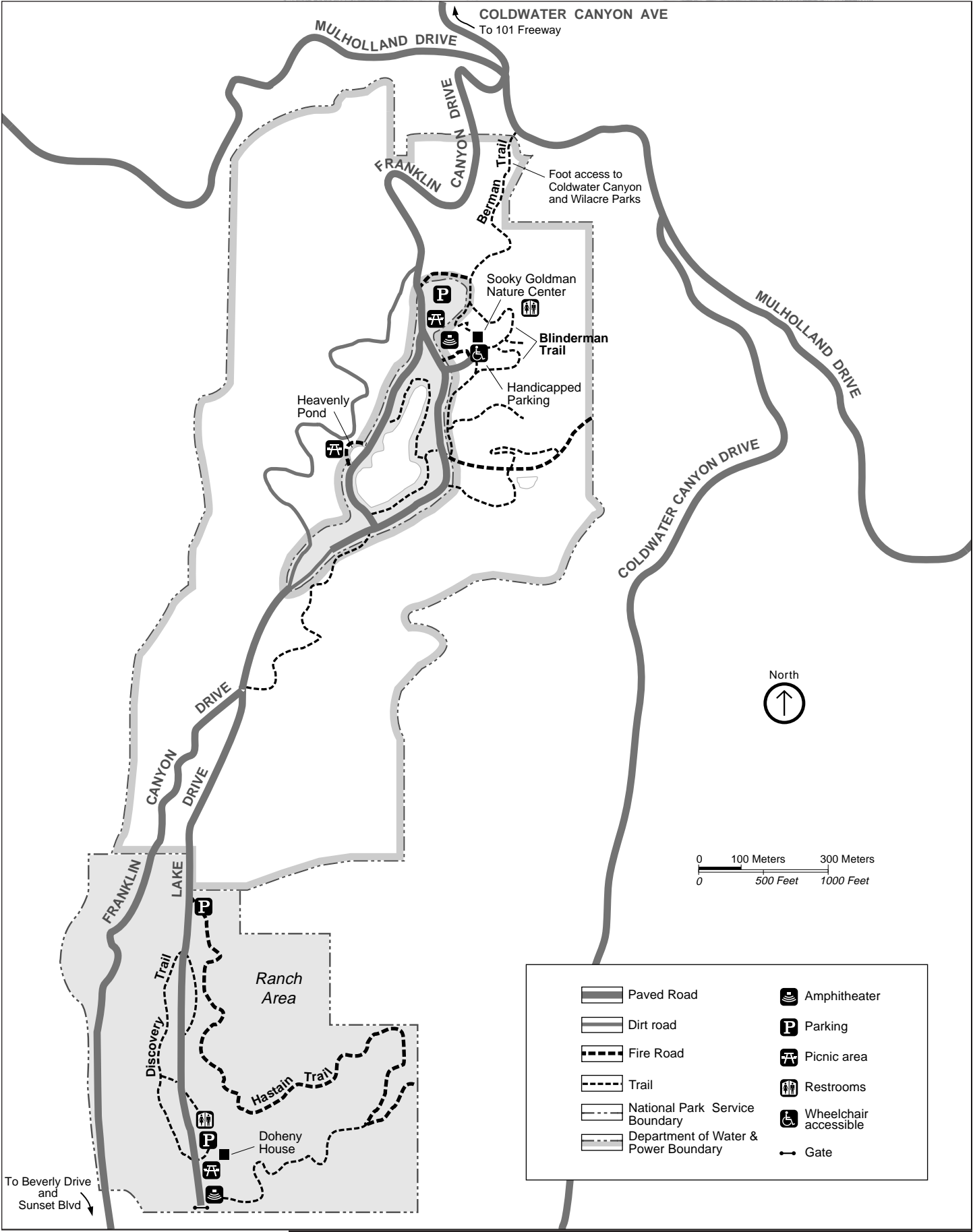
Motor vehicle access through the canyon is permitted from 8am until sunset daily. Obey all speed limits and yield to pedestrians. Speed limit in the canyon is 15 mph.

National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains Nat. Rec. Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks CA 91360
805-370-2301

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Sooky Goldman Nature Center &
William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom
2600 Franklin Canyon Drive
Beverly Hills CA 90210
310-858-7272

In emergency: dial 911

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Trails

Discovery Trail 0.3 miles round trip, easy—
Loops through the black walnut woodland along the canyon bottom.

Hastain Trail 2.3 miles round trip, moderate to strenuous—Rising steadily on a fire road through a chaparral covered slope you will arrive at an overlook offering views of the lower canyon, west Los Angeles and on a clear day, the Pacific Ocean. From there, the trail drops down a single track trail to the lawn at the Ranch Area next to the old Doheny house.

Berman Trail 1 mile to Mulholland Dr., moderate to strenuous—Allows you to hike across the Santa Monica Mountains from Franklin Canyon to Coldwater Canyon Park and Wilacre Park.

Please respect trail use designations. To preserve the environment and for your safety, stay on trails.

Parking areas: The main parking lot is located at the Ranch Area adjacent to the Doheny House. Additional parking is available along Lake Drive and at the Sooky Goldman Nature Center.